

weighed against the current situation in our economy, and what our schools are already committed to doing to assist needy students.

Madam Chair, I am pleased to rise in support of this legislation and I urge strongly that my colleagues do the same. We have all watched the tuition at public and private colleges double, then triple as time has passed, creating a burdensome gap for our students to overcome. The students of this country are our greatest hope—they are our future doctors, our future lawyers, our future teachers and our future public servants. To not ensure that they have an affordable, quality education would be to shortchange their success and the success of our country.

INTRODUCTION OF “NEWSPAPER REVITALIZATION ACT OF 2009”

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 17, 2009

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the “Newspaper Revitalization Act of 2009,” the companion to legislation introduced in the Senate by Senator CARDIN (D-MD). This legislation will help newspapers across the country that are closing down or facing bankruptcy at an alarming rate by allowing them to become non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations similar to public broadcasting. Large cities whose newspapers include, The Philadelphia Inquirer, The Seattle Post-Intelligencer, The Rocky Mountain News, San Francisco Chronicle, and The Baltimore Sun are at risk of losing their dailies. Unless something is done soon, it is possible that many metropolitan regions may have no local daily newspapers.

Many bloggers, Google news, and punditry get their original news from the diligent work of beat reporters for daily newspapers who have invested years on their beat and provide the best information on an issue from many perspectives. This type of beat reporting requires commitments of both time and money, and unfortunately, the current economic climate has only worsened the already precarious business situation for many newspapers. This bill would provide for a voluntary option for newspapers and a way for a community or foundations to step in and preserve their local papers that are rapidly disappearing.

Newspapers are an essential component to our free democratic society. Studies have shown that areas where daily newspapers have gone out of business there has been a rise in corruption in government and plummeting civil engagement in politics. With the state of the current newspaper model, dependent on advertising and circulation revenue, it will be difficult for newspapers to maintain and produce high quality news without bold changes. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation as an important first step in saving them.

NATIONAL GEAR UP DAY

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 17, 2009

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program, or GEAR UP. This program has improved educational outcomes for over a million low-income students across the United States by providing college readiness partnerships and scholarships for low income students.

Tomorrow, September 18th, is the first annual “National GEAR UP Day” to acknowledge the success GEAR UP has had in providing students with the resources they need to go to college despite the challenges they may face in their communities. Over 1.5 million GEAR UP students have been served over the last ten years. GEAR UP offers comprehensive mentoring, tutoring, financial aid counseling and also provides information and activities regarding college admissions.

With my colleagues, Congressman CROWLEY and Congressman SERRANO, I would like to recognize the success of the Bronx Institute at Lehman College which administers three GEAR UP grants in more than 50 schools in the Bronx. These programs serve more than 8,500 Bronx students in grades 8, 9 and 11. They offer after school, weekend and evening classes and workshops for students and parents. Their project staff provides one to one counseling and college readiness support to all students and families. They have in place, and continue to develop and support, rigorous instructional programs that serve to prepare students for college level learning. Additionally, the Bronx Institute at Lehman College’s technology program has distributed more than 6,500 laptops to students and will add to that number this year.

In the 110th Congress I was proud to have been a cosponsor and supporter of H. Res. 1311, expressing support for the designation of a National GEAR UP Day and am glad that it has come to realization.

Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join with me in recognizing and commending the students, families, education professionals, and business and community leaders involved in GEAR UP on its 10th anniversary.

STUDENT AID AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 16, 2009

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3221) to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes:

Ms. WATERS. Madam Chair, I rise to support H.R. 3221, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2009. I’d also like to commend my colleague from California, Chairman GEORGE MILLER for his hard work to bring this bill to the floor today.

Now more than ever, Americans need affordable and quality educational opportunities that will help make our economy stronger and more competitive. This bill embraces President Obama’s challenge to produce more college graduates by the year 2020 by making higher education more accessible. This legislation achieves that goal by transforming the way student loan programs operate.

The Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act is the single largest investment in aid to help students and families pay for college in history—and it does so at no cost to taxpayers. The bill reforms the system of federal student loans to save taxpayers \$87 billion—and then invests \$77 billion of those savings back into education, particularly by making college more affordable, and directs \$10 billion back to the Treasury to reduce entitlement spending. Among its many provisions, I am especially pleased that the maximum Pell Grant is increased from \$5,350 in 2009 to \$5,550 in 2010 and to \$6,900 in 2019 and that interest rates are kept low on subsidized federal student loans. This will help more students graduate with less debt. Unfortunately, too many students are graduating with record debt, partly because grant aid doesn’t cover nearly as large a share of college costs as it used to. This legislation will allow us to invest \$40 billion in the Pell Grant scholarship, to keep interest rates affordable on need-based federal student loans, to simplify the federal student aid application process, and to invest in other forms of aid that will help low-income, middle class and minority students pay for and complete college.

H.R. 3221 will also stabilize and safeguard the federal student loan program that students and families depend on to pay for college. The intertwined economic and credit crises have exposed serious vulnerabilities in the structure of the federally-guaranteed student loan program—putting it on life support. Families shouldn’t have to worry about whether the roller coaster fluctuations of the financial markets will hurt their access to low-cost student loans. By originating all new federal loans through the cheaper Direct Loan program, students and parents will be able to receive the same loans with the added assurance that these loans are entirely reliable, no matter what happens in the economy. This simple change will save taxpayers \$87 billion over 10 years.

H.R. 3221 also builds on the best of what works in the private sector to provide borrowers with top-notch customer service. The legislation will allow state non-profit lenders and private industry to continue doing what they do best—servicing loans. It will allow private entities to compete for contracts to service these loans—ensuring that students get the best services available and maintaining jobs in communities across the country. This bill also eliminates waste and creates a streamlined, cost-effective program for families and taxpayers. Each year, billions of taxpayers’ dollars are being sent into a program that no longer works—and that the Department of Education can administer for a much lower cost. This is exactly the kind of waste we need to eliminate in tough fiscal times. By cutting out the middleman, this legislation will save taxpayers \$87 billion over 10 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office. It’s a smarter business decision for taxpayers and families.

One of the most exciting provisions of this bill is that it makes an unprecedented \$10 billion investment to make community colleges part of our economy's recovery. For years, business leaders have told us there weren't enough workers with the knowledge and the expertise for their specific industries. H.R. 3221 will change that. It will help us build a 21st century workforce by strengthening partnerships among community colleges, businesses and job training programs that will align community college curricula with the needs of high-wage, high-demand industries. It will provide community colleges with the tools to replicate programs that are successfully educating and training students and workers for these fields.

As a former Head Start volunteer coordinator, I know first-hand that creating better educational opportunities demands that we invest in our students long before they reach college. To ensure that the next generation of students enters kindergarten with the skills they need to succeed in school, the legislation creates an Early Learning Challenge Fund to increase high-quality early learning opportunities for low-income children. It also will help provide every child with access to a world-class learning environment by investing in school modernization, renovation, and repair projects that will create healthier, safer, and more energy-efficient environments—a measure the House is already on record supporting.

However there is one provision that was added to HR 3221 in the Education and Labor Committee that I am very concerned about. I'm sure it was included with the best of intentions, but for the record, I would like to share with my colleagues what I believe will be the real impact of this provision. Under current law, for-profit postsecondary schools are required to maintain a certain formula for how they receive federal funding, commonly known as 90–10. This means that a school must, at a minimum, acquire 10 percent of its funding from sources other than federal money. The original 90–10 provisions were added because too many for-profit schools were receiving large amounts of federal funding from students who indebted themselves without receiving the training they signed up for. I worked with a number of my colleagues here to help put those 90–10 provisions in place. This formula was enacted after years of students being ripped off and schools raking in record profits. If the schools violate 90–10, they are assessed a financial penalty.

The provision added in Committee would weaken the current standards and basically kick the can down the road by extending the violation period from two to three years. This is completely unnecessary. What is the point of having the formula if we'll allow for-profit schools to continue to violate it?

I am looking forward to work with Chairman MILLER and other Members to make sure that the final bill does not include another victory for an industry that does not have students' best interests in mind. Moving forward, it is my recommendation that we revisit the rules that govern these for-profit schools and allow them to continue accessing federal funds but that also ensure that they fully report graduation and dropout rates, default rates, and job placement rates.

In closing, this is not a perfect bill, but it is a tremendous investment in education for American families and I urge my colleagues to

vote for passage on H.R. 3221, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2009.

MOUNT NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL

HON. JEAN SCHMIDT

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 17, 2009

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 150th Anniversary of Mount Notre Dame High School in Cincinnati, Ohio. On this date, 150 years ago, the Mount Notre Dame Academy, sponsored by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, opened with 30 boarders. Mount Notre Dame is the oldest catholic girls' high school in the same location in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

Over the years, Mount Notre Dame has endured immense enrollment growth and has transitioned to an all girls high school with more than 750 students. The young women of this proud school come from four Ohio counties and 50 church parishes. Today, Mount Notre Dame offers 19 honors and 17 advanced placement courses. Ninety-Eight percent of graduates go on to college. Additionally, Mount Notre Dame was named a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the United States Department of Education in 1987.

Mount Notre Dame is also known for their success outside of the classroom. The Cougars have a combined twelve state championships in the team sports of basketball, golf, and volleyball. Just this past March, Mount Notre Dame won the 2009 Division I State Basketball Championship.

Madam Speaker, I ask you to join me in celebrating Mount Notre Dame 150th Anniversary and in wishing them continued success.

MICROSOFT CORPORATION

HON. DAVID G. REICHERT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 17, 2009

Mr. REICHERT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Microsoft Corporation for receiving an award from the Department of Defense for its unending support of employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve.

The Microsoft Corporation was presented with the 2009 Employer Support Freedom Award on September 17 along with 14 other employers across the United States. Specifically, Microsoft—among other things—initiated a Military Reservist Council, acknowledges employee service through different company newsletters and, in 2007, donated \$3.7 million to the National Guard Youth Foundation.

Microsoft's support for our service members is a model that other employers should follow, and it is the paramount duty of Congress to do its part to help our service members make a seamless transition back to civilian life from active duty. It is a priority that requires both private and public sector support. I was pleased that the House passed legislation I authored last Congress to improve the government's responsiveness to hiring difficulties our service members face upon their return, and I hope that this body can continue to partner

with private sector champions like Microsoft to help provide a smooth transition for our service members and veterans between military life and civilian life.

Again, I applaud the Microsoft Corporation for supporting their National Guard and Reserve employees and congratulate them on receiving the 2009 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. I know they will continue to provide outstanding support to Washington's service members in the future, and I pledge to continue doing the same serving in this body. We must do all we can to provide for those who have bravely sacrificed so much to defend our freedoms.

STUDENT AID AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 16, 2009

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3221) to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes:

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Chair, the House is considering H.R. 3221, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act. I support many of the goals of this legislation, including finding savings in the current student loan program and directing these funds toward expanding student grant aid that will help make higher education a reality for more South Dakotans. However, I have heard from constituents who work in the Federal Family Education Loan Program, FFELP, in my State, and in particular from The Student Loan Corporation in Sioux Falls, that the enactment of this bill could result in the loss of hundreds if not thousands of jobs in South Dakota during this period of continuing higher unemployment, as the country works its way out of economic recession. I also have concerns about completely eliminating a role for the private sector in providing student loans and about the potential disruptions in access to loans for students that could occur during the proposed transition to the new system over the next months.

I have helped to lead the effort in the House of Representatives with my colleague and fellow Blue Dog, ALLEN BOYD of Florida, and we've been joined by a number of our colleagues in the House of Representatives in sharing our concerns on this subject with U.S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan and with the House Education and Labor Committee. I urged the Secretary and the Committee to more fully consider all possible alternatives that would substantially increase funding for Pell Grants and other important sources of financial access to higher education, while maintaining jobs in our districts and ensuring continued access to loans for students. Over the course of the FFELP's decades of existence, it has proven that private competition in the student loan system provides benefits to students. I believe that the FFELP has been a cost effective alternative to "direct lending" for many students in South Dakota. In addition, I am concerned that the Department of Education may not have the resources adequate to handle the origination,